

Attachment 3: Animal Regulations

ISSUE

- Should the City change the maximum allowable number of large animals per acre under the animal husbandry land use?
- Should the determination for the conditional use of greater than the maximum number of allowed animals be changed from the Hearing Examiner to an Administrative Conditional Use?
- Should the City strike the language regarding animal replacement and transferability, effectively allowing residents to replace animals and allow the use of property for animal husbandry to run with the land?

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adopting code amendments that would allow two large animals per acre and the conditional use of greater number of animals to be determined by administrative decision to allow animal replacement and allow animal husbandry land use to remain an accepted use upon sale of the property. These changes reflect recommendations of the East Renton Plateau Citizens Task Force and better reflect the current animal husbandry practices that are occurring in the East Renton area.

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Through the East Renton Plateau Citizens Task Force and comments at public meetings regarding the East Renton Plateau, an issue with City of Renton policy and standards for the number of animals allowable for animal husbandry with large animals was brought forward. Current City policy limits the number of large animals to one animal per acre. A point of concern regarding the welfare of large animals, which tend to be herd animals, was made. Additionally, it was expressed that the current City policy simply encourages residents to be non-compliant until such time that they are notified that they are not in compliance with City code.

Currently, City code requires a Hearing Examiner public hearing in order to seek permission to keep greater than the allowable number of animals for animal husbandry. It was expressed that this adds a layer of inconvenience and cost to animal owners as they seek to comply with City Code and obtain a conditional use permit if they have more animals than the stated maximum animals. Further, the costs associated with appealing to the Hearing Examiner may discourage residents from following City code. The process and costs related to obtaining an Administrative Conditional Use is simplified and costs less for citizens.

The section of code regarding non-conforming uses for the keeping of animals has a clause that does not allow animal replacement for grandfathered animals. It was expressed that this policy simply encourages animal owners to circumvent City policy by claiming that replacement animals are in fact the original animal. Elimination of this

clause better accommodates animal owners and the historical use of their land for animal husbandry. The non-conforming use section also has a clause that does not allow a non-conforming use to remain with the property on which the use is occurring if the property is sold. This policy is not necessarily appropriate for lower density areas that have a history of land use with animal husbandry; it may unduly place higher density land use standards on such an area.

CONCLUSION

City of Renton code regarding animal husbandry is perceived as unfair. Amending code to allow two large animals per acre would demonstrate a better understanding of the nature of herd animals and the keeping of such animals. The East Renton Plateau is a Potential Annexation Area with a significant amount of lower density, R-4 and R-1, land use. If the area votes in favor of annexation, it is likely that many residents would not wish to be required to change their lifestyle and the historical use of their property for the purposes of animal husbandry. Amending the code to better accommodate this type of lower density land use is appropriate.